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ABSTRACT

This lesson plan asks students to be staff members of a classroom newspaper that is developing a series of articles on the Holocaust. Students work in small groups to research, and eventually report on, a particular topic concerning the Holocaust. The series of articles will work as a whole to refute the arguments of those who deny the existence of the Holocaust. Students are provided with background information, detailed instructions, online resources, and reflection questions. The teacher's notes describe the unit's purpose, explain the unit's correlation to history/social science standards, suggest day-by-day teaching strategies, and provide a Web site for teaching about the Holocaust. (BT)

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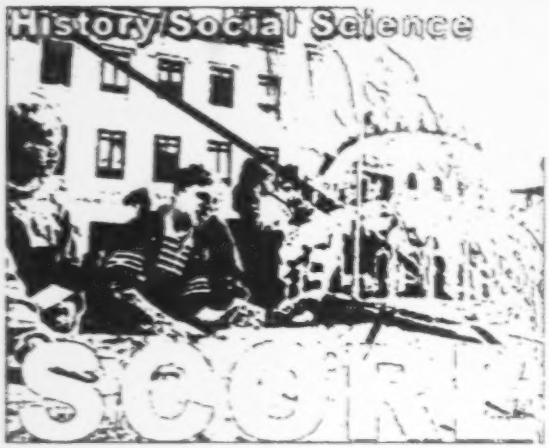

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Nazi Germany Through An Examination of the Holocaust

10th Grade Lesson by Peter Milbury

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http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/holocaust/index.html

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Teacher Notes

http://www.newc.com/pj/holocaust/finalsol2.html

Nazi Germany Through An Examination of the Holocaust

You are a new staff member of your local newspaper. Your Series Editor (your teacher) has called together a team of writers, researchers and networkers for an important series of stories that is developing. You are delighted to find that you are a key member of that team.

The project is described in a memo from the Managing Editor, as follows:

The Task

MEMO

FROM: THE MANAGING EDITOR
TO: THE SERIES EDITOR AND RESEARCH-WRITING TEAM
SUBJECT: SERIES ON HOLOCAUST DENIAL MOVEMENT

Recently our newspaper has received a lot of extremist calls and letters, related to an article we ran about events in the Middle East and Israel. These calls and letters include derogatory references to various minority groups and religions, and deny that the Nazi Holocaust-- the extermination of Jews, Catholics, Gypsies and other minorities occurred. Recently there has also been an increase in the number of physical attacks (i.e., smashed windows, arson, bombings) on synagogues, churches and homes of minority groups in our state and elsewhere.

Due to these events, we have decided to produce a special series of stories on The Holocaust, with reference to the "Denialists" and their arguments that the Holocaust did not occur. The series will include photos, interviews, and extensive documentation. The series will address the major issues in this controversy, and provide an objective analysis-- not only of the history of the Holocaust, but with references how it relates to our current situation.

Your Group Report and Presentation

The final group report is a 10-15 minute presentation to the Series Editor (your teacher and class). The report may take any shape the teacher feels is appropriate. Your group may produce a newspaper style layout, modeled on an actual newspaper. Your group might also simply produce a report, which they present to the class using visual aids. In any event, you will need to make use of technology to support your research, including resource references, pictures, maps, charts, models, and other acceptable means which reflects serious research has been done.

Resources

Resources on the World Wide Web:

Although there are far more sites related to this area of study available through the SCORE Web Pages, the following will give a basic set of helpful resources to get started.

Nazi Holocaust Unit: Selected Sites of Interest

- Institute for Historical Review Pamphlets
  - http://members.aol.com/ihrgreg/documents/documents.html
  - A collection of online pamphlets that support the theme that the Holocaust did not occur. Some of these dispute that people were exterminated at Auschwitz, and claim to disprove other "myths" about the Holocaust.

- Nizkor Home Page
  - http://www1.us.nizkor.org/
  - Gathers and organizes links to major Internet resources about the Holocaust, as well as the contemporary "Holocaust denial" movement.

- Other Sites: Promotion of Holocaust Denial and Related Issues
  - http://www.nizkor.org/other-sites/promotion-index.html
  - A collection of sites which promote the idea that the Holocaust did not occur. This is part of the Nizkor site, which explains and teaches about the events of the Holocaust.

- Holocaust: Other Related Sites
  - http://www1.us.nizkor.org/other-sites/
  - A section of a site dedicated to teaching about the Holocaust, which included links to related sites, including those who deny that the Holocaust occurred.

- Adolf Hitler's First Antisemitic Writing, 1919
  - http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~german/gtext/kaiserreich/hitler2.html
  - Text of an anti-semitic letter from Adolph Hitler. Written in 1919, long before he took control of Germany with his Nazi party.

- Perpetrators of the Holocaust
  - http://www.remember.org/
  - Letters, speeches and other documents created by the people who conducted the Holocaust: Hitler, Himmler, and other Nazis.

- The Holocaust Definition/Explanation- "The Final Solution"

- http://www.newc.com.pj/holocaust/holocaust.html
- Holocaust means the destruction of life by fire, and defines the systematic destruction of nearly six million Jews by the Nazi regime from 1933-45. (This site gives a much more detailed explanation.)

- Questions About the Holocaust, No. 1-18
  - http://www.wiesenthal.com/resource/36quest1.htm
  - Answers to 36 of the most common questions about the Holocaust. Many interesting and helpful facts are explained here.

- Responses to Holocaust Revisionist Arguments
  - http://www.wiesenthal.com/resource/revision.htm
  - The following questions are routinely posed by "Historical Revisionists" in their efforts to deny the existence of the Holocaust. The responses to these arguments are posted here.

- Remembering the Holocaust
  - http://homevicnet.net.au/~aragorn/holocaus.htm
  - Six million Jews (and millions of others) perished under Nazi tyranny - perished for no reason other than the fact that they were Jews. This page is a collection of many links on the Internet that offer information about how that happened.

The Process

Brainstorming:

Before you get started, the following three questions will be brainstormed with the class, to set up the problem, familiarize you with the terminology and historical background. The Series Editor (teacher) will facilitate, making notes, concept-mapping at the chalkboard. The result should be saved, for reference by your group, to remind you of the various aspects of the problem.

- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- Where can we find out what we need to know?

Task Definition With the Series Editor (Your Teacher):

Your job as a member of the Series team is to locate and examine the "Denialist" arguments. Then

research the facts of history to determine if there is any basis for the "Denialist" claims. You may also note any similarities between the beliefs of the "Denialists" and the perpetrators of the Holocaust (i.e., the Nazis).

You will, of course, need to produce the highest quality documentation for your work. You will be using the Internet/World Wide Web (including the online archives of other newspapers,) as major resources, as well as other electronic and print resources (books, magazine articles) of our library.

Your grade will be based on these criteria:

- 40% Oral (Final) Report to the Series Editor
- 40% Written or Multimedia Report
- 20% Daily Briefings

Time is of the essence, so good planning is very important. Before you get started you will need to create a list of the most effective and useful places to do your research. Make a list of the questions to be answered, and kinds of information you will need to answer them. Keep accurate documentation of your sources, so that they can be checked in the event that you are challenged.

You will be expected to report your progress in our daily editorial briefings, so that we can react to new facts and data that are uncovered.

Assignment into Groups:

Due to the complexity of events related to the Holocaust, you will be assigned to groups. Each of the groups will focus on various aspects of the problem. One will zero in on:

1. Krystallancht (The Night of Broken Glass)
2. The Nazi death camps,
3. Mass psychology of the Nazis
4. Theory of Aryan Superiority and the "Final Solution"
5. Reaction of the U.S. and others to Holocaust reports at that time

This approach is used because each group will contribute something special to the total learning experience, and allow you to teach each other, while the teacher guides and coaches from the side.

You are in groups of 4-5, and assigned roles as reporters, writers, researchers, or other related roles. You should all contribute to the project work, and your individual contributions highlighted during the regular briefing sessions.

Briefings:

Regular briefings of the groups by your Series Editor (your teacher) will be used to check and guide your progress. Both the research progress and your approach to the problem will be reviewed, making sure that all students are contributing; that they are making use of the resources, and are focused on the solution of the problem.

Learning Advice

It is important that your work meets the criteria outlined in the Memo from the Managing Editor, and outlined in the Process section. The basic questions must be answered. Your use of a variety of information resources, the citation of the resources used, and use of technology for presentation must be observed or documented.

Evaluation

The final group report is a 10-15 minute presentation to the Series Editor (your teacher and class). The report may take any shape the teacher feels is appropriate. Your group may produce a newspaper style layout, modeled on an actual newspaper. Your group might also simply produce a report, which they present to the class using visual aids. In any event, you will need to make use of technology to support your research, including resource references, pictures, maps, charts, models, and other acceptable means which reflects serious research has been done.

Before the final presentation, both the teacher and students need to identify the criteria for a "good" presentation and research process. The product and the processes, procedures, and efforts should be examined with these criteria in mind. From this list of criteria develop a rubric for scoring the presentations and research.

Reflection

Ask yourself the following questions about the research process and the presentation that you did for the Series Editor

- What worked and what didn't?
- Was time effectively used?
- Were ideas well-presented?
- What could have improved their work?

Conclusion

Now that you have examined the Holocaust and Nazi Germany, and connected it to the Holocaust denialist arguments of today, you should have an opinion about the possibility that it could happen again. What are the forces that produce such events? Are they present today? How do we know? What does one do about preventing it?

Teacher Notes:

Grade Level/Unit:
Grade 10 Totalitarianism in the Modern World

H/SS Content Standards

10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of the Second World War, in terms of:

> 5.the Nazi policy of pursuing racial purity, especially against the European Jews, its transformation into the Final Solution and the Holocaust resulting in the murder of six million Jewish civilians

Lesson purpose:
Students will be enabled to understand the events of the Holocaust and Nazi Germany in the context of current events and sociopolitical movements (i.e., Holocaust Denialists or revisionists.)

Students will use computers, online databases, and print materials to gather information. They will read, analyze, evaluate, synthesize and present their ideas through multi-media.

Lesson length:
7-10 class hours for research, 3-4 for presentations (plus outside research by students.)

Teacher Resources on the World Wide Web:
Although there are far more sites related to this area of study available through the SCORE Web Pages, the following will give a basic set of helpful resources to get started.

Nazi Holocaust Unit: Selected Sites of Interest

- Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust
  - *http://www.ushmm.org/education/guidelines.html*
  - While this document offers many useful guidelines for the successful teaching of the Holocaust, it also offers an opportunity to obtain an overview of this area of study, and the purposes of such pursuits.

Teaching Steps:

Introduction

Teacher asks the class to imagine that they work for a local or regional newspaper, in the Editorial Department (where the editors, writers, reporters create the "news" stories.

Teacher introduces the problem (assuming the role of Series Editor), by reading the Memo below, from the Managing Editor to the Series editor and Research-Writing Team.

Introduction (sample):
"You are a new staff member of the local newspaper. Your Series Editor (me) has called together a team of writers, researchers and networkers for an important series of stories that is developing, and you are delighted to find that you are a key member of that team."

The project is described in a memo from the Managing Editor given above.

Help Students Define the Task

Tell students, that their job as members of the Series team is to locate and examine the "Denialist" arguments. Then research the facts of history to determine if there is any basis for the "Denialist" claims. You should also note any similarities between the beliefs of the "Denialists" and the perpetrators of the Holocaust (i.e., the Nazis).

Tell them that they are expected to produce the highest quality documentation for their work. Explain that they will be using the Internet/World Wide Web (including the online archives of other newspapers,) as major resources, as well as other electronic and print resources (books, magazine articles) of our library.

Time is of the essence, so good planning is very important. Before students get started they will need to create a list of the most effective and useful places to do research. Make a list of the questions to be answered, and kinds of information that will be needed to answer them. Keep accurate documentation of sources, so that they can be checked in the event of a challenge.

Brainstorming

The following three questions should be brainstormed with the class, to set up the problem, familiarize students with the terminology and historical background. Series Editor should facilitate, making notes, concept-mapping at the chalkboard. The result should be saved, for reference by the groups, to remind them of the various aspects of the problem.

- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- Where can we find out what we need to know?

It may be necessary to reread the Memo document to them, and perhaps post it on a bulletin board, or even make copies for each group to keep.

Discussion

A discussion of problem-based learning may be necessary. The teacher should explain that they will need to work as teams, and will have to report regularly during "briefings" on their progress. This schedule should be set by the teacher, and carefully followed, since many students are unused to group projects. (Teacher can meet separately with the each group, or as a class, or a mixture of both, depending on how their work progresses.

Assignment into Groups

Due to the complexity of events related to the Holocaust, groups focus on various aspects of the problem. One will zero in on Krystallancht, the death camps, while another covers mass psychology of the Nazis, while another reviews the theory of Aryan Superiority or the reaction of the U.S. to Holocaust reports from the scene. This approach is recommended, since each group will contribute something special to the total learning experience, and allow them to teach each other, while the teacher guides and coaches from the side.

Students are assigned to groups of 4-5, and assigned roles as reporters, writers, researchers, or other related roles. They should all contribute to the project work, and their individual contributions highlighted during the briefing sessions.

Briefings

The regular briefings that the groups provide should be used to check their progress. Both their progress and their process should be watched, making sure that all students are contributing, that they are making use of the resources, and are focused on the solution of the problem.

Product and Evaluation

The final group report is the product, and may take any shape the teacher feels is appropriate. They may produce a newspaper style layout, modeled on an actual newspaper. They might also simply produce a report, which they present to the class using visual aids. In any event, they will need to make use of technology to support their research, including resource references, pictures, maps, charts, models, and other acceptable means which reflects serious research has been done.

It is important that their work meets the criteria outlined in the Memo from the Managing Editor. The basic questions must be answered. Their use of information technology, the citation of resources, and use of technology for presentation must be observed or documented.

The evaluation should be approached by both the teacher and student. Both their product and the processes, procedures, and efforts should be examined. What worked and what didn't? Was time effectively used, ideas well-presented? What could have improved their work? These are the sorts of questions that should be asked.

Credits

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